The Deduction Guide

Louise Blackwood

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The world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever observes.

Sherlock Holmes

Part One
An Introduction to Deduction

The trick to deduction is to close your mouth and open your eyes. Look in places people do not normally look, and take in as much as possible.

I

To Begin

In order to begin making deductions about your surroundings, you must first realize that the science of deduction is in fact a science of two parts.

The first of the two is observation.

You must become aware of your surroundings on an intimate level. You must not only see, but observe. Think of your grandparent's house. Can you recall the number of rooms? The different types of flooring around their house, or how many steps there are to the second story? How accurately could you describe to me the appearance and interior of your favorite coffee shop? What color are the counters? Is there any art hanging on the walls? What kind of art?

The next time you go out, try to pick up on these kinds of details. Open your senses, and begin to not only see the surface events, but the intricate details of the environment, the people, the atmosphere, and so on. This requires not just using the eyes, but the ears, hands, nose, and occasionally, even the tongue.

Not only does the art of observation help with making deductions, but it opens your mind to truly appreciate the world around you. There is so much beauty in the world that the average human overlooks every day. Why would anyone want to miss out on the immense beauty of an old wooden wall in an old dimly-lit pub, or the vast, tall ceiling of a library? Or perhaps the truly intricate taste and rich flavor notes of coffee in the morning, when time is taken to breathe in the aroma and understand the flavor before gulping it down as a mere source of energy? Thinking in this manner will not only sharpen your skills, but allow you to live more mindfully, so that you may enjoy and appreciate life more.

The second is deduction.

Now, before some of you vocabulary nuts start criticizing me, I am aware that the word for the process which I am about to elucidate throughout the course of this book is not in truth entitled deduction, but rather *induction*. Where deduction is a process of reasoning that begins with a known truth that is then applied to a specific case, induction is using observations and evidence to infer a specific conclusion. However, despite the discrepancy in vocabulary, I will continue to refer to the methods of induction that we will be discussing throughout this book as “deduction”, since the term is so commonly tied to Sherlock Holmes and has become so closely associated with his way of thinking. But when you become a master of deduction, you should be cognizant of the true meanings of the words which are linked to your skills. One should always be able to speak eloquently and intelligently about one’s masteries.

II

The Golden Rules

When you hear hoofbeats, think horses, not zebras.

This is one of the most important rules of deduction. Go with the most obvious answer to something, and go with what makes the most sense. More likely than not, what is probable is what happens, at least in this universe.

Consider generally accepted truths.

When observing objects and attempting to read conclusions from them, consider any generally accepted truths that may be relevant.

For example, consider a bookshelf, with several books at the back of the shelf, a box of jewelry in front of those books, and a family photo placed against the box of jewelry, nearly hiding it. Finally, in front of the photo, a tube of chapstick and a comb.

Now, a generally accepted truth is that people want their most commonly used things to be the most accessible. It just makes sense. You can almost guarantee that they don't read those books often, or get into that jewelry box often. It may not seem like a tremendous amount of work, but it would be too inconvenient to have to move that photo and then slide that jewelry box over just to get to a book, or even to move the photo to get to the jewelry.

The most important items are the chapstick and comb, of course, and the photo, even if just for that daily reminder of family. Perhaps those books are the ones they read a long time ago and keep only for sentimental reasons, and perhaps the jewelry box was a gift from a relative, or just contains the jewelry they don't often wear.

Once you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.

There is a reason Sherlock Holmes said this line so often. If something does not make sense, it most likely is not the correct answer. For example: it does not make sense that two people in a single living space would share a bed when it is against a wall. There must be another solution, perhaps the person does in fact live alone, or perhaps the other person sleeps on the couch.

Use information to your advantage.

Try to learn everything you can about your surroundings. While it may be impractical to have 243 types of tobacco ash stored in your noggin, it is incredibly useful to learn how to read body language, how to read text quickly, and how to spot many of the signs I will discuss in part two of this guide. Understand what information is relevant and important to you.

Know how and when to use the resources that are available to you.

There is a reason BBC's Sherlock is on his smartphone a lot: it is an incredibly useful tool. Do not feel the need to keep everything in your head for storage, or you will just drag yourself down with weight, when there is something of immense value called the Internet available to you right in your pocket. Make sure you know how to properly and efficiently use a search engine.

For storing of information that you find useful, I personally recommend the free tool Evernote, which is available as a desktop application and on multiple mobile platforms, and is used to collect articles and other text documents. Google Drive is also a tremendously valuable tool, and can store any kind of file online and in a folder on your computer.

Do not jump to conclusions.

Take in as much as you can before you start to make deductions. Start simply by observing. Take a sweep of the entire subject you are attempting to read, and then another round for good measure, otherwise you may miss something vital or mistake one sign for something it is not.

The best deductions are those based on not one but multiple signs. Do not just look at a person's face without looking at their clothes, shoes, posture, body language, personal belongings, and so on (especially since most people focus on a person's face when talking to them). Look for clusters of indicators.

Know that people are not all alike.

The tells that one person has when lying may be entirely different from the next person's. Some people cross their arms because they are upset, anxious, shy, or something else, and yet for some, it does not mean nearly as much because it is a neutral stance. Perhaps it is just a bit chilly. Try to establish a baseline, and see if you can get to know them at their most neutral state. The longer you know a person, the easier it is to understand their behavior and body language.

Keep an open mind.

Your mind must be receptive to new information and ideas. Sometimes humans tend to fancy an idea they have conjured in their minds without any reasoning or evidence, and fixate on it entirely. You must not try to alter the facts to fit your theory, but rather, alter your theory to align with the facts.

Additionally, keeping your mind open requires you to question your surroundings. Do not fall into the trap of believing everything you hear or see. Know what to believe when.

III

Where the Heck Do I Start?

Set goals

Before we start studying the world around us, we need to understand just where to look and what to look for. Nobody is able to tell off the bat another person's entire life story, and so you must allow yourself to make small steps.

In the beginning, set a simple, small goal for yourself, such as determining the handedness of a person, or perhaps how comfortable or uncomfortable a person seems in a particular situation.

Once you find that you are able to make conclusions like these, expand a little at a time until you feel comfortable with greater tasks.

Open your eyes

The first step in learning the ways of deduction is to learn how to observe. It is one thing to how to navigate from your home to your place of work, but can you actually envision the details of your surroundings during the trip? Do you ever observe how many stop-lights you pass through, or how many bridges you drive under? In order to become a master of deduction, you must start not only seeing your surroundings, but taking in the details and understand them. Pay attention to what's going on around you.

Now, close your eyes

Another very important part of observation and deduction is the ability to recall information. This will likely prove more difficult than simple observation, but it is vital when making deductions nonetheless. The more intricate and precise the images in your mind are, the more useful they will become.

Close your eyes (after reading this paragraph) and think of your bedroom. (If you are currently in your bedroom, think of another room that you know just

as well.) Picture in your mind the walls and furniture in this room. Once you have a perfect image in your head, and can navigate through it, add some of the other important features such as your lamp, computer, and so on. Continue envisioning all of the details until you have a complete rendering of your room. This ability to reconstruct images with such precise detail will be a great benefit.

A wonderful tool that aids in the ability to envision and to recall information is the mind palace, which will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

Look at details of ordinary objects

Say, for example, your friend's phone. Maybe there is an engraving on the back and scratches near the charger port that can tell you it has had a previous owner. Most people skip over this kind of information because they are concerned with the main functions of the phone, and what is on the screen itself. Don't forget about everything underneath.

Use all of your senses

Much of what I will talk about will be what you can observe with your eyes, because it is easiest to discuss on paper, but do not forget that you also have ears, hands, a nose, and taste buds.

Watch people

Just go sit outside at a café, a mall, or any other public space where there are many people, and study people's mannerisms. Get into the habit of doing this all the time. Do not just look at their faces, as that is but a tiny portion of their body. You might notice patterns, and from there you can begin to make deductions.

If you cannot hear their conversation, imagine what they are saying based on their body language. Say you are at dinner, looking at a party of two across the restaurant. Are they leaning in towards each other, looking around a lot, and giggling? They may be gossiping. Are they leaning in but focused on each other? It is more likely a very intimate setting, potentially romantic.

The next time you are with a friend, someone whose mannerisms you know very well, see if you can notice anything different or unusual. For example, are they more fidgety than usual? Do they seem distracted, maybe checking their watch or phone every few minutes? Starting with people you know the best will help in the long run.

Read everything you see

I often find myself reading everything in the room around me: signs on the walls, labels, charts, sticky notes, book titles. It is often highly informative when making deductions.

There are many resources out there dedicated to increasing the speed of your reading, and I have included an article in the “Recommended Material” to get you started.

Speculate

Your imagination is one of your most vital tools. When attempting to determine the reasoning behind a piece of evidence or anything you have witnessed or observed, you must be able to come up with a multitude of potential scenarios. This tactic is sometimes entitled “lateral thinking”. You may find listing them out on paper to be useful at first. From there, you can eliminate the impossible, and attempt to eliminate the improbable. You must be wary, however, for just because something is not probable, does not mean it is not true. Ask yourself how it got there, and why.

Make deductions about yourself

It may sound odd, but consider this. You know yourself very well. Look at your room, and study your clothes, as well as the items in your bag or purse. Try to see what they say about you.

You may have yellow teeth, but you do not smoke, and you figure out it must be because you drink so much tea or coffee. Knowing this, you realize that you cannot make the mistake of assuming that everyone with yellow teeth is a smoker.

Say you know that you are right handed, but you notice that you tend to pick up coffee mugs with your left hand. You now understand that you can’t make the mistake of just looking at a coffee mug to determine a person’s handedness.

Now, say you have a to-do list on your white board, including entries such as “go to the gym” or “clean basement”; what does that say about you? Is it because you are always aiming for self-improvement and like to stay organized and in control of your life?

These sorts of things can apply to others just as well, so use it as a learning exercise, and from there you can have these things readily available. When you see another person with a white board such as yours, you may be able to tell what it says about them.

Filter out the junk (ask the right questions)

Do not spend your time obsessing over every speck of dust and every imperfection in a brick wall. That will get you nowhere. Look for things that are unusual and stick out. If you are in a place you know very well, it is easier to notice the things that are out of the ordinary. With practice, you will realize what matters and what does not and be able to create a filter. Make sure you are asking yourself the right questions.

Build a foundation of knowledge and comparisons

In order to make deductions about anything, comparisons have to be made. A messy room is only messy in comparison to other rooms, and a person's seemingly nervous behavior is only nervous in comparison to others. You have to go out and find as many comparison locations or subjects as you can, before you make valid assessments. Build a repertoire in your mind of what you have witnessed.

Be aware also that your standards are different from the next person's. Again referring to a messy room, a room may be messy to your eyes, but tidy to its owners. Keep objectivity in mind. Building a foundation of knowledge will help in this.

Consider meditation

Meditation is a wonderful tool, and not just for those looking to be more like Sherlock Holmes. Meditation is about sitting still, letting your thoughts go, and clearing your head. The benefits of meditation include relieving of stress, relaxation, improved mental acuity and ability to focus, improved memory, increased creativity, and more.[1]

Meditating for just ten minutes a day can improve many facets of your life. Personally, I find that meditating towards the end of the day when I begin to cool down and get ready for bed is the best time for me. Others find that meditating in the morning gives them a good mental jumpstart for the new day. Regardless, you can meditate anywhere and anytime.

I have included some resources about meditation in the "Recommended Materials" section at the back of this book.

IV

The Mind Palace

The mind palace is an ancient Greek tool for storing memories and information. It is a mnemonic filing system over two thousand years old. It is also known as the “method of loci”, which is a way to store information using visual and spatial memory.

It can help you remember what you need to buy at the grocery store, memorize a deck of cards, remember your class notes for an exam, or give a long speech without notes by following along each point or each location in your mind palace.

Sherlock Holmes uses his mind palace to retrieve details he has picked up throughout a case, and store information about a wide variety of topics.

MAPPING OUT YOUR PALACE

I suggest starting with your house or even just your bedroom at first. The architecture and format of your palace should remain constant, because what the data (information) you will fill it with will change over time. Each time you travel through your mind palace, you will want to take the same route. Start at the front door, for example, and then turn to the right and walk down that hallway into the kitchen, and so forth.

Your palace will be filled with ordered points that function as “hooks” on which you can hang your data, which may include objects like armchairs, coatracks, tables, or framed art. The more objects you have to use as hooks, the more information you can store. And again, be sure to keep these points in order.

I find that creating a mind palace for a single subject, such as a shopping list or notes for a class, works best for me. You may end up making several mind

palaces, each with its own purpose. Some people designate a room or a discrete section of their mind palace (such as a single building in a large city for a city-sized palace), for a specific topic, and then it becomes one huge filing system.

Again, it's all about what works for you and you alone. Your mind palace (or in this case, your mind kingdom) is all yours. I can't tell you exactly how to run it, but I can give you suggestions.

STORING THE DATA

The information that will be stored in your mind palace will be represented by images that you will have to come up with.

The more bizarre or comical your connections, the easier they are to remember. Again, nobody else will ever have to know what exactly is going on in your mind palace, so there is no need to be embarrassed.

For an example of an absurd connection, here’s the image I use to remember what pitches exist in what's called a German augmented sixth chord. The solfege pitch “me” (pronounced “may”) is what makes this chord different from others of its kind, and May is a month in Spring. After associating Germany (it's the German chord) with Nazis, I now I have my full image for this musical sonority: Springtime for Hitler (from The Producers). A poster of a blonde John Barrowman singing joyfully about Nazis, or even just imagining hearing the song may be a rather absurd connection, but I will never forget it.

For some people, a ridiculous comparison or memory tool is not always necessary. Let’s suppose you are trying to remember a short shopping list a few days in advance, that consists of a few things (let’s say eggs, milk, and bread). You may find it helpful to imagine large versions of those items inside the palace (for example, imagine a huge egg in the living room, a huge carton of milk in the kitchen, and a giant loaf of bread by the stairs). Placing them near the entrance may also be helpful, since it is a short term list.

Some people have found that simply mentally spray-painting large words on walls is sufficient for remembering a piece of information.

There are many ways to remember an image, but the key to storing your data is that it is memorable.

V

Body Language & Behavior

Body language is a science of understanding human behavior. It presents many variables, and differs from culture to culture, and person to person. Be wary of people and their differences. Understand that context is also necessary. In one situation, a woman playing with hair may come across as flirty, but it another, it may indicate she is nervous or even annoyed. However, there are some forms of body language that are considered universal, and some tactics that humans know instinctively, such as the pacifying behavior, which will be discussed below.

The area of the brain that controls our reactions to the world around us is called the limbic system. It is considered to be the honest part of the brain. The section in which we reason and negotiate is the neocortex, and is responsible for our ability to lie. A human's ability to communicate nonverbally comes from the limbic system, so naturally it is much easier to trust and may help in the detection of lies and honest feelings.

There are essentially two categories of cues in the world of nonverbal communication conveys: comfort and discomfort. Comfort may include emotions such as happiness, relaxation, and elation, for example. Discomfort may include unhappiness, anger, stress, nervousness, disgust, and annoyance.

Just as in any form of communication, isolated signs are rarely helpful. Humans verbally communicate with one another not through unrelated and isolated words, but in sentences. This applies to body language as well. Look at the bigger picture. Look at your subject's face, arms, legs, general posture, position in relation to others, and so on, in order to ensure you are collecting a sufficient amount of "words" to put together a "sentence". The best and most accurate deductions are the ones that have the most evidence, and this applies not only to body language, but to any subject from which you will attempt to

make deductions, including a person's house or their wallet.

Before you begin reading someone's body language, establish what is called a "baseline behavior". Look for patterns, such as common gestures when you know this person is nervous, and you will be able to see this nervousness in the future. The better you know someone, the easier it is to read their body language.

There is a way to categorize personality traits called the Big Five, to which I will occasionally refer. It measures these five traits:

Openness (to experience; also known as inquisitiveness): curiosity, appreciation for art and culture, thirst for adventure, willingness to try new things, creativity, inventiveness

Conscientiousness (also known as orderliness): organization, self-discipline, dependability, efficiency, desire for achievement

Extraversion: outgoing, energetic, assertive, talkative

Agreeableness (also known as accommodation): compassionate, warm, cooperative, friendly, trusting

Neuroticism: sensitive, nervous, anxious, temperamental, vulnerable, emotionally unstable

When making deductions, make it a goal of yours to try and identify where a person lies in relation to these five traits, because they are excellent indicators of personality.

It is also important to note that with any skill set, the successful reading body language is acquired through practice. One of the most important exercises you can do to improve your understanding of nonverbal communication is to go out and people-watch. The more you observe people and their behavior, the easier they become to read.

In addition being able to make deductions about them, you will also be able to more successfully communicate with them since you will understand what they desire and what they are thinking. You will be able to use this to your advantage. For example, if someone is showing signs that they dislike you or are highly angered, it might be wise to either steer away from them or fix the situation.

Realize that culture and location is a big influence on body language and behavior. Consider the differences in the pace of life between New York City

and rural West Virginia, or the differences in manners between the United States and Japan. Be aware of these differences whenever making deductions.

GENERAL BODY LANGUAGE & BEHAVIOR

Pacifying behaviors are used when someone is uncomfortable or feels threatened, and is attempting to calm themselves down. For example, a woman will often rub or touch the area below her “Adam’s apple” and above her breastbone, known as the suprasternal notch. Playing with her necklace may satisfy the same need. Other examples of this kind of behavior include:

biting or playing with items such as pencils
rubbing the neck
touching the face (more common in men)
touching the forehead
placing the wrist against the forehead
pulling on an earlobe
playing with hair (more common in women)
licking lips
puffing cheeks and exhaling
adjusting a tie or shirt collar
tugging on the shirt collar, as if to cool off

If someone is mirroring your body language (e.g. crossing their arms after you cross your arms, putting their hands in their lap after you do, etc.), it is most likely an unconscious sign of interest or an attempt at your approval. This is called isopraxism.

Look for habitual gestures. For example, a woman who just cut her hair short may grasp the back of her head. Someone who has recently switched from glasses to contacts may push the bridge of their nose with their finger. Someone who has been wearing a ring for a long time may reach to twist or play with it, even if it isn’t there.

If you notice a person checking themselves out frequently in mirrors or other reflective surfaces, especially when walking down a street, you could very well guess they have narcissistic qualities and think of themselves highly.

If a person gets defensive when a particular character trait of theirs is questioned, such as their open-mindedness, it is a trait they pride themselves on highly.

Liberals tend to be more extraverted and expressive, and often smile more. They are generally higher on openness (Big Five trait).

Conservatives tend to be organized and higher on conscientiousness, and lower on openness.

People often want to be viewed the way they see themselves, even regarding their negative traits. Suppose someone with low self-esteem receives a pay raise; they may disagree with the decision, and possibly even reject the raise or quit their job.

When trying to identify if one is trying to manipulate you or create a false front (e.g. attempting to display certain character traits they don't possess)…

Realize that there is a limit to how much manipulation one can do. For example, a person's bedroom can be made tidy to attempt to appear tidy to guests, but an inherently untidy person can only do so much. A normally organized person may file their documents with labels, and use a calendar with color-coding. An untidy or unorganized person will not have the system in place to be able to seem that organized.

A person may display certain objects, such as awards or photos of them hiking in a foreign country, in attempt to impress, but realize that they had to win the award and hike in a foreign country in order to display those signals.

Look for inconsistencies in behavior, appearance, and belongings. If there are multiple signals telling you certain information, the more likely it is to be valid.

SPEECH PATTERNS

Notice accents, slang and other colloquialisms, vocabulary, volume of speech

(do they speak quietly or loudly), inflections upon certain words, and so on.

Extraverted people tend to use language that avoids negative emotion. They also tend to make distinctions through the use of exclusive words, such as *but*, *without*, and *except*.

People high on the trait openness use less first-person singular pronouns, such as *I*, *me*, and *my*, and instead favor articles, such as *a* and *the*.

People who have more self-esteem and self-focus will favor first-person singular pronouns. This includes people of higher social status. Woman will also use these words more often than men.

When one is telling the truth, he or she will tend to use more first-person singular pronouns and exclusive words (such as *but*, *without*, *except*).

Adding “I mean” before saying something indicates a desire for reassurance, communication, and attention.

Those who use filler words such as “um” and discourse markers such as “like”, or “you know” tend to be more conscientious, and this stems from a genuine desire to communicate their ideas and opinions and consider their speech carefully.

GENERAL FACE & HEAD

In the “Helpful Resources” chapter near the end of this book, there is a section about microexpressions, which are brief facial expressions that are very difficult to fake and are excellent indicators of underlying emotion.

If someone lowers their head after receiving a compliment, they are likely shy, embarrassed, or contemplating to themselves.

Faked emotions and expressions are often more asymmetrical than those which are genuine.

EYES

Pupil size can be an indicator of interest. If the pupils are dilated (eyes attempting to obtain more light), they are interested or attracted. Although, do consider the lighting of the environment. In a dimly lit room, everyone's pupils will be somewhat dilated to compensate for the darkness.

Blinking rapidly can be caused by discomfort or distress.

In general, a look to the right suggests a lie, fabrication, creativity, guessing. Left, truth and memory.

You may be able to tell if a person is liberal or a conservative by looking at their eyes. If during conversation, you glance away to look at something and they also look with you, they are more likely to be liberal, and vice versa: if they do not look at what you are glancing at, conservative.

MOUTH

A universal sign for displeasure, anger, or uncertainty is when the lips are pressed together and made to seem invisible (lip compression).

A faked or forced smile does not affect the eyes. A real smile creates lines or creases near the eyes.

Yawning after another person's yawn (contagious yawning) can indicate empathy or respect. They may view the original yawner as a figure of authority or superiority. This is an example of isopraxism (psychological mirroring).

If a person exhales cigarette smoke in an upward direction, they may be feeling

confident or pleased. A downward direction implies secret or negative feelings. A situation in which this may be useful is at a poker table.

TORSO

The torso is the house for all of the vital organs, and the brain will do what it must to ensure this area is protected if it senses danger.

People lean in towards things they like or are comfortable around. For example, if two people are on a date at a restaurant and they are both leaning in towards each other, the date is most certainly going well. (Especially if you can find other signs of positive body language, such as feet touching, or if the woman is twirling her hair. Always remember that the best evidence comes in clusters.) Leaning away signifies discomfort, dislike, and other similar emotions.

Another sign of comfort is what Joe Navarro (author of *What Every BODY Is Saying*) calls “ventral fronting”. If someone displays their torso openly, such as with their arms out of the way of their torso, they are open to the subject.

The crossing of the arms is a sign that must be read carefully. For many people, crossing arms is a comfortable position. People also cross their arms if they’re cold, and it might have no bearing on their emotional status, besides discomfort from the weather (see below for another explanation). It is important to take notice when someone makes a *sudden* move to cross their arms, and notice how tightly they are holding their arms. A tight grip is a sign of discomfort, anger, nervousness, or some other negative emotion.

The opposite of ventral fronting is ventral denial: turning away of the torso. If someone turns their torso away, even by just a few degrees, they are most likely uncomfortable, nervous, or may dislike the person or subject they are facing. Examples of ventral denial:

> Buttoning or constant buttoning and unbuttoning of one’s (although buttoning a jacket might be necessary in a formal situation), playing with cufflinks or a watch, rolling and unrolling sleeves, fixing a tie. The

arms are serving as the shield to the torso, and the hands are given something to do.

Crossing one's arms can also be seen as an attempt to block the torso. A pose that is more common in women is holding an elbow with the opposite hand. (See below for more explanation.)

Carrying books, bag, or purse in front of the chest can signify nervousness. Imagine someone on their way to an exam, and holding their books to their chest.

If someone is complaining about the cold and no one else seems to be affected, perhaps this person has a reason to feel uncomfortable. When the body feels under threat, the limbic system actually transfers blood from the skin to the muscles as in preparation for fleeing or fighting, which makes the skin cooler. Sometimes they will appear paler.

ARMS & HANDS

Exposed necks and palms/insides of wrists are signs of trust and openness.

Sweaty hands may be indicative of anxiety, nervousness, or fear. People with sweaty hands may tend to rub their hands on their pants or clothing in an attempt to dry them off (although rubbing of the legs itself can be a general stress reliever/pacifying behavior, with or without the sweaty palms). This act also tends to cause small clothing fibers to stick to their hands due to the moisture, which may be observed.

A firm handshake can indicate a person who is more extraverted and less neurotic (as in, less emotionally stable, less confident, and more worrisome). A firm handshake may also indicate openness (as in, to new experiences) in women.

A weak handshake can indicate one who is introverted, neurotic, and unexpressive.

LEGS & FEET

According to ex-FBI agent Joe Navarro in his book “What Every BODY Is Saying”, the feet are the most honest part of the body. Humans are trained beginning at a young age to be able to lie and even to manipulate their body language, and taught to keep a smile on their face regardless of whether or not they are happy. However, nobody ever talks to them about what their feet may be saying.

You can tell what a person is interested in by looking at their feet. If they are pointed away from a conversation, they are probably not very interested in it. If they are pointed at you, then it is a sign of attraction and interest in your direction. For example, say you walk up to a group of people having a conversation, and a person’s feet turn to your direction. That person is pleased to see you and is welcoming you into the conversation. If only their torso moves and not their feet, they may not want to be disturbed. If someone is talking to you and their feet are pointed away, they may have something to hide or want to leave.

If someone’s feet are wiggling or bouncing, it may be a sign of high confidence, pleasure, or excitement. They may be getting what they wanted. However, sometimes a person’s legs shake because they are naturally restless, or they are anxious, feeling impatient, or want to leave. In order to decide whether the bouncing feet or legs are portraying pleasure or something negative, look elsewhere for other signs. If the speed or intensity of the bouncing changes, for example, try to decide why.

If, whilst sitting, someone’s feet kick the air suddenly or change from wiggling nervously to kicking, it is likely a sign that they have heard something negative. The kicking is an attempt of the limbic system to combat the unpleasant thought, question, or subject.

If someone is wiggling their feet and suddenly stops, it is often a sign of stress. Their limbic system is telling their body to freeze, in reaction to a threat.

Some indicators of happiness, excitement, or other positive emotions that originate in the feet include:

rocking on the balls of the feet

heel on the ground, toes pointing upward (especially a sudden movement, as in upon hearing good news)
a “bounce” in the step

If someone is talking or telling a story and stands up on the balls of their feet during certain words, they are putting unconscious emphasis on those words, and are genuinely excited about the topic.

If someone who is sitting clasps their hands on their knees, they most likely want to stand up and leave the situation. Usually, this act is followed by a forward lean or a move towards the edge of the seat, right before standing up.

When someone stands with their legs apart, they are trying to appear threatening and intimidating, or assert their authority. If you think about it, they are trying to make themselves look bigger. Often, female policemen will use this tactic to assert themselves in front of criminals. Sometimes, the posture is used when someone is in an argument or looking for a fight, so you may want to look out in case of trouble.

Crossed legs are a sign of comfort and confidence. One’s balance decreases, and less physical space is being used. The body is not physically ready for an escape or fight of any kind, and it feels safe and relaxes enough to cross its legs.

Often, when someone’s legs are crossed, their legs will tilt in such a way that the feet are pointed towards a person they admire or favor.

Sitting with crossed ankles for an extended period of time or ankles wrapped around the legs of a chair are usually a sign of discomfort, and again, an attempt by the limbic system to freeze in the face of a threat or stress. If someone has their ankles stuck in a certain position, they are less likely to move them; therefore, it may be an attempt to conceal a lie by concealing potential body language. However, this is not the only reason for restricting movements. It may even mean they are trying to be cautious. This is an example of when context is important.

Although it is a fairly well known gesture, purposefully touching or caressing someone’s foot under a table is indicative of affection and romance. If a woman

is sliding her foot in and out of her shoe, it is certainly a sign of sexual desire and interest (the symbolism here is probably obvious).

VI

Appearance

GENERAL APPEARANCE

When someone is sad or ill, one of the first things to drop is their level of care in hygiene. Think of someone who's stuck at home with the flu or recovering from a bad break up: the last thing they want to do in these situations is brush their hair or dress up nicely.

If you notice black smears on someone's face or hands, it might be from eyeliner or mascara that has been smeared from tears or itchy eyes.

Someone that has been recently crying will have red watery eyes, and may be looking down and avoiding eye contact and confrontation about their recent tears. Their face may be red and puffy, and they may be sniffling. Note that some of these are similar signs to one who has a cold or who has recently gone out in the cold, so be cautious. Context and clusters are everything.

If a long-haired person's hair is thicker on one side, a possible explanation is that they wear a bag or purse with a shoulder strap, and that the strap has worn down the hair on that side.

Notice which way a person looks first when crossing a street; it can potentially be a sign of their country of origin (see resources in back of book).

If a person is holding in a large breath and exhaling in quick, short bursts, they are likely suppressing pain.

A person who smiles with all of their (straight) teeth and much of their upper gum visible is likely to have had braces.

HANDS

Look for scratches, scabs, or scars on a person's hands. Their dominant hand will likely have more imperfections than their non-dominant hand, because their dominant hand is often subjected to more precarious situations.

A left handed person may appear to be ambidextrous, but that is because they were brought up in a society that is tailored to right-handed people, so they have adapted and may do some activities with their right hand or foot, such as kicking or throwing a ball.

Scientifically, if a person's ring finger is longer than their index finger, they have more testosterone than estrogen; if the index finger is longer, they have more estrogen than testosterone. What this translates to: for a woman, having more testosterone lends itself to homosexuality, and more masculine or "boyish" qualities. For a man, having more estrogen lends itself to homosexuality or more feminine qualities. This should certainly be taken with a grain of salt. Please do not automatically assume that the person is homosexual, as that can be a tragic and rather offensive mistake to make.

If a right-handed smoker often smokes with their left hand, it may be because they drive often. They smoke while they drive, and flick the ashes out the window easily. (This of course does not apply in countries where the driver's seat is on the right.) This is not the only plausible explanation, however, as they may just be a multi-tasker.

TAN LINES

Tan lines are good hints about a person’s general habits. Someone with strong tan lines spends time outside and wears similar clothing each day that they spend outside. Common suspects for the famous farmer's tan include ball players, manual laborers, and, of course, farmers. But tan lines can involve any part of the body and can have several implications.

Think of the time of year. If someone has a strong tan line during the winter, they may have gone overseas recently to a warm or tropical place, especially if they are tan in places that winter clothes cover.

Tan lines around the face and especially the eyes often signal sunglasses. Looking to the shape and size, you can determine other features. A tan that fades quickly on the back of the neck, leaving a pale strip under the hair, may designate that someone recently had a haircut and that they spend time outside.

Look for an imbalance in the tan. If one side of the body is more tanned, specifically the arm, the person has spent a significant amount of time driving recently or in general. If it is the right arm, they have spent more time as a passenger (at least in parts of the world where the driver sits on the left). Left arm, driver.

Look to the feet. Most people will have a tan gradient there. Someone who consistently wears socks of the same length will have a line where the socks end. Otherwise, you can determine someone’s normal footwear based on their tan at the shoeline. If there is hardly any tan line, perhaps they prefer to wear pants all the time, or if they have tan legs and feet, perhaps they like to wear shorts and go around barefoot. Look for sandal/flip-flop tans as well.

CLOTHING

Notice the style, apparent wear, and general appearance of the clothing. Is it practical? Colorful and vibrant? Are there holes or other signs of wear? Notice the color choices. Are the clothes creased and wrinkled? Contemplate on what

these descriptors may indicate.

You may be able to tell if your subject owns a dog or a cat by looking at the clothes they are wearing. If there is hair on their shirt, it is more likely a cat than a dog. A cat will often sit on their lap or crawl in that area when they are sitting down. Of course, it could also be a small lap dog. If the hair is down by their ankles, it is harder to tell because both dogs and cats will rub against their legs.

Cat hair on clothing: if the hair is pin-like, stiff, and woven between several threads of their clothing, it is likely a short-haired cat. If it is fine, flexible, and rests upon the fabric, long-haired.

You can tell what articles of clothing a person has recently worn from any seam marks or indentations left on their skin. Socks, bras, and tight skinny jeans are all examples of clothing that can leave distinguishable marks.

You can tell if a woman's swimsuit is old and worn from several features, mostly on the seat of the swimsuit: faded color, losing its elasticity, sagging fabric, and lint-balls stuck to the bottom.

You can tell how a person ties their shoes by looking at the position of their laces. If the bow is in the middle of the shoe, they tie their shoes while bending down. If the bow is towards the inside of each foot, they tie their shoes when sitting with their legs crossed.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS: PHONES

A person's phone can tell you a great deal about them: potentially, their economic status, interest in technology, and some less obvious things. Are there a lot of scratches on it? They probably keep their phone in their pocket or bag with keys and coins. Is there an engraving? What kind of marks do they have on their screen (fingerprints, that is), or do they wipe it clean? Their screen may be full of greasy swirls, which implies that they have just recently been on the phone, since their oily face would be rubbing against their screen.

Go below the surface if you can, even just a glance may suffice, so you are able

to see the contents of their device, such as the apps they have on their first page (may tell you their priorities), whether they have their phone on 12 or 24 hour time (can tell you possible military experience or country of origin), the languages on their keyboard (especially with iPhone), *etc.* An app such as a mileage logger may imply that not only do they travel in their car a lot, but perhaps they travel for work and the logger is for reimbursements. A lot of games (also, notice the type) may say quite a bit about a person as well.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS: KEYS

On my set of keys, I have a lanyard attached to two separate key rings, each with its own purpose. On one, I have three keys to my apartment: the bottom staircase key (with the top painted red because the door is red), the deadlock key (painted white because that door is white), and the actual doorknob key (not painted, because I only use that key in case it is accidentally locked, because I only habitually use the deadlock). I also have the key to my P.O. Box. I live in a downtown area, where mail is not delivered to my door. I also have a single keychain, one that my mother gave me from New Orleans, and it has a few musical instruments on it. I am a musician, and music is the most important thing in my life. Most of the time, I only keep this key ring attached to my lanyard.

On the other key ring, I have three car keys – all cars of my parents, the house key to my parent's house, the key to my fireproof safe that holds my passport and other important documents, and a small key that went to a padlock that I locked to the Pont des Art bridge over the Seine River in Paris with my boyfriend[2], and I keep it for purely sentimental reasons. I only have this key ring attached to my lanyard when I go to visit my parents, or am borrowing a car of theirs. If I need to get into my safe, which is rarely, I'll just dig out the key for that.

Why am I telling you all of this? Say you knew me and you knew that I didn't have a car, and sometimes you would see that I only had a few keys on my lanyard, and then one day I had both key rings. You could deduce that I will be going to see my parents or borrow a car from them in the immediate future, or have just gotten back from doing so.

Note the kinds of store cards a person may have on their key ring. Nowadays, many people elect to use a phone number at the store in place of a store card, but some people still carry around cards.

Key chains are good indicators of what a person values or treasures (such is the case of my music key chain). Keys are something that a person carries around everywhere they go, so deciding what gets attached to what lets you into your house and car is a very deliberate choice, whether conscious or not. Is it a souvenir keychain from Aruba, with some palm trees and a beach? They not only like to travel, but it is important to them and they like people to know that they have traveled.

Notice the number of key chains they have, as well. Again referring to my personal set of keys, I have a single key chain. I view myself to be a practical, organized, and focused person (high on conscientious), with music as a defining part of my life and my personality. There is no other indicator of personality on my key ring, therefore it could be inferred that music is not only a hobby, but a priority and an integral part of my character. If someone were to have six or seven key chains on their key ring, with all kinds of messages, perhaps they are lower on conscientiousness and are not as focused.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS: WATCHES

Characterize the watch and the location. A wristwatch is certainly more functional than a pocket watch, likely an accessory to impress. Is it a sturdy watch with scratched glass or is it gold-plated and shined? A cleaned watch shows care. A dirty one may imply either manual labor or simply less hygiene. If you can, examine the back of the watch. Cleanliness shows either extreme care or relative newness. Notice the brand as well.

Consider the materials as well. Plastic watches are more common among those who are more active or who spend less. They are also more often waterproof or water resistant than metal bands. Metal bands are more expensive and can be a show of spending.

Notice if a person who wears a watch still reaches into their pocket to glance at their phone for the time. Perhaps they obtained that watch recently, or are more used to a digital clock than an analog, if it's an analog watch.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS: WALLETS

I must advise against snooping through someone's wallet, but if you have a chance to take a peek at the contents, it can provide a great deal of insight. Try to peek discreetly and preferably when they themselves are holding and opening their wallet (think of how Sherlock managed to see the contents of the car dealer's wallet in "The Great Game").

Notice the wear and apparent age of the wallet, as well as the style. Is it a practical, simple wallet? A colorful wallet with glitter or other decorations? Consider what these signals might indicate.

Look for store cards, and how worn each one may be. Notice the order in which the cards are placed; they are certain to be ordered by priority and amount of use. Check for any certification cards, such as First Aid, scuba diving, *etc.*

Check for any receipts or shopping lists. Not to mention the obvious conclusions you can come to from reading one's receipts, if you ever have the chance to survey someone's shopping list in comparison to their receipts, you might learn quite a bit about their habits, including their impulsiveness or self-discipline. The receipt of an impulsive buyer will include things that were not listed on the shopping list. Note that these items may also be found in someone's garbage, if you ever have the chance (and the desire) to rummage through one's trash.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS: OTHER

When assessing a person's purse, backpack, or other bag, Ask yourself questions similar to those you would ask about their clothing or wallet. Style, color, and apparent wear may all be indicators.

Notice if they are carrying an umbrella, and if it is wet or dry. Think back to

“The Study in Pink”, when Sherlock uses a woman’s umbrella in combination with her coat to determine where she came from. In that case, the umbrella was dry and unused, but the coat was soaked. That must mean that it was highly windy, much too strong for the use of an umbrella.

VII

Around the House

Realize that a person's house is the window to their lifestyle, especially their bedroom. If you have gotten into their house, you will be able to tell a lot about them, and most of the signs they take for granted. People do not think about a lot of the things that are the same each day in their own home.

Under the category of decorations and other seemingly "non-functional" objects, there are two subcategories of such items in a person's space: those items that are directed at others, and those that are directed at themselves.

For example, one might hang a cross in the living room to display and potentially impress others. Someone else might hang a cross in their bedroom - someone who is likely more personal and intimate about their religious beliefs.

Or, consider a poster of Che Guevara. Is it hanging on the door to their bedroom, or another relatively public place? They are attempting to use that poster to display for others their innate rebelliousness or progressive thinking, or what have you. Or is that poster hanging in their study? It is a much more personal symbol, perhaps one to inspire them to think progressively or to trudge through whatever is getting them down.

Are the family photos on a businessman's desk facing him or facing the guest seat? Does he value his family and cherish them on a more personal level, or does he like showing off his beautiful kids and his trophy wife?

Additionally, it may be difficult to decipher what exactly a certain item means to a person. It could be a reminder from some event they attended, or a time in their life that is not easily determined by what the object is.

Remember, too, that you are trying to get past first impressions when doing your snooping in someone's space. If you are sitting in a person's chair in their office, realize that they may have spent some time setting up your view. You aren't able to see from that chair the photos facing them on the desk, or the mess

in their desk drawers.

Look for signs constantly. Lighters lying around? Likely a smoker. Mug with the handle to the left? Potentially left-handed (but look for other evidence to support this… and read below). Look at their medicine cabinet (bathroom breaks are great for snooping). Do they have glasses or glasses cases lying around, perhaps near their computer or sitting on top of a book? Is the house generally messy or neat?

Look for the things that are most accessible. On a bookshelf, if there are many things sitting in front of the books, they do not pick up those books often (think back to the example from earlier with the jewelry box, photo, chapstick, and comb). Things at the bottom of a stack or a drawer are not used as often or seen as quite as important as the things in front of or on top of them. The spices at the front of the spice cupboard, for example, are the most frequently or most recently used.

If you see a product (especially a brand, or something with a title) that you cannot identify, research it. You may find out it is only available in certain areas of the world, or serves a specific purpose.

Don't forget about what you can see in reflections, whether they be mirrors, windows, computer screens, or other reflective surfaces.

While looking at the bedroom of someone high on openness (Big Five), you are likely to find a wide variety of music, books about travel, feminism, and so on, art, art supplies, maps, and so on. Someone high on openness may have unusual or unconventional items in their homes. People high on openness are also more likely to be liberal.

Conservatives tend to decorate with more traditional decorations, such as sports objects, or flags (like the American flag). They tend to be more organized than liberals, with things like calendars and postage stamps.

Notice if books, CDs, magazines, *etc.* are organized in any particular way, such as alphabetically or by genre. Are they visually aligned, or perhaps aligned by size or color? A level of organization this high can indicate a high level of

conscientiousness.

When attempting to gauge someone's conscientiousness, be aware that sometimes a person may seem organized, and have implemented a system of organization such as a filing system for CDs, complete with labels. Look deeper to ensure whether or not they keep up with this system. Perhaps they spent an afternoon a long time ago creating that system, but now the CDs are out of order, and some are sideways. A person high on conscientiousness will keep up with their habits, whereas a person low on that trait will fail to.

When in someone's house, you can tell if a person has a dog or cat if there are smudges on the screen/glass doors, especially the back door, from the animal's nose. The height of the smudges is also a good indication of the size of the animal.

In a room where everything indicates a right-handed person except for a mug facing the left, it is perhaps because the person multitasks and drinks with their left hand.

Stickers and other markings such as drawings on the furniture around the house may suggest a low income family; richer families likely forbid their kids to place stickers on their expensive furniture.

Another potential sign of a low income family (past or present) is a great amount of clutter. Take for example elderly folk who may have grown up through the Great Depression: they once had next to nothing to their name, and now that they live in a time where they can collect a lot of things in their home, and they tend to treasure every single newspaper or ceramic figurine they get their hands on. (Of course, some younger people may just prefer clutter because of a personality trait.) Clutter may also be a sign of lack of planning, or a generally absent-minded person. A messy workspace may also signal someone who is creative and focused on their work, but not necessarily. There are many reasons one can have a messy workspace or living area.

Check if any light bulbs that are off are still warm to tell if it has been on recently.

Realize that there are two kinds of tidy: a space that is regularly cleaned and organized, and a space that is not used often enough to need cleaning.

Keep in mind that many of these suggestions can also be applied to photographs.

KITCHEN

A kitchen cabinet, refrigerator, grocery bag, or shopping cart can be a tremendous piece of insight into a person's health and lifestyle. Notice any gluten-or lactose-free products? Any low-fat or other products that may suggest he or she is on a diet? Are there any foreign foods? Do they go for expensive brands or generic brands? Do they buy TV dinners and other individual meals?

If there are a wide variety of herbs and spices, they enjoy cooking and do so often. And again, the ones that are in the most accessible positions such as the front of a cabinet are the ones most often used.

If there is a step ladder near their cabinets, but no children in the home, it possible the person (or another person living there) is short for their age.

Look at any cookbooks they own. For example, do they own any vegetarian or other diet cookbooks? If a person living alone has a vegetarian cookbook or two among other cookbooks, consider what this may imply. Did they try vegetarianism for a while and decide it wasn't for them? Do they cook vegetarian foods sometimes, perhaps for friends or family? Also, look at how used or worn each cookbook is.

BEDROOM/WORKSPACE

When a bed is against a wall, it is undoubtedly the bed of a single person. It would not be shared because the person on the inside would have trouble getting out of bed, especially during the middle of the night, without disturbing the person on the outside.

Look for objects that may tell you their interests (especially in their bedroom) - such as posters, paint or sketchbooks, camping equipment, hygiene products, books and television, *etc.*

A person’s computer keyboard can tell you quite a bit. How worn the keys are collectively can tell you how long they’ve had it. Different countries have different keyboards (for example, instead of QWERTY, it would be AZERTY in French). Certain languages also use certain keys infrequently (for example, the letter K is seldom used in French).

A mouse on the right side of a keyboard does not automatically imply a right-handed person. Many left handed people have grown accustomed to using the mouse with their right hand.

Look at a person’s desk for signs of a right or left handed person. If a person’s utensil cup, computer mouse, trash bin, and other such working utensils are on the right side of their desk, the likelihood of right-handedness is great.

Inspirational posters and other forms of self-motivation or self-affirmation are generally used more often by people who are high on neuroticism and are more anxious.

OUTSIDE

A person’s front yard is a chance to display to the public what they like about themselves, especially more so than a back yard, which can be more private and intimate. Look for things that may have been set up deliberately in each yard, like flags, plants, and so on. Remember the difference between items meant for outward display or inward symbols.

If a person’s footprints are deeper around the toes and are farther apart, that person was running.

If a person’s footprints are deeper than usual, they may have been carrying something heavy.

Be aware that the length of a person’s stride is not the best tool for estimating a person’s height. Over and over, scientists have tried coming up with a formula

for calculating height from stride length, but it is too inexact a science. The same applies to foot size.

IN THE CAR

It is possible to tell if someone just arrived at a location by listening closely to their car. If you can hear crackling noises, the passenger(s) must have arrived within minutes ago. The crackling is due to the hot metals inside the car cooling off and expanding/contracting.

License plates have the last two digits of the year they were purchased, and some have the month as well.

If a person’s rear view mirror is angled downward toward the back seat, it is likely the owner has children, and that those children are small and require supervision.

VIII

Online & On Paper You can tell if someone is American or British English by the way they spell certain words. For example, -or vs. -our (favorite vs. favourite), -ize/-yze vs. -ise/-yse (analyze vs. analyse), gray vs. grey, *etc.* Also, there are differences in slang and some other common phrases (that you could learn on your own, not here). A pinky finger in America is called a little finger in Britain. Watch out for Canadian English as well, as their rules are closer to British English.

ON THE INTERNET

Suppose you're chatting with someone online (in an unprofessional setting in this case) who invariably types without proper capitalization, and all of a sudden the first words of each sentence are capitalized, they are likely on their smartphone which auto-capitalizes their sentences.

When detecting by sight if a photo has been edited using photo manipulation software...

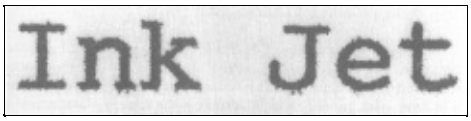
Look for illogically smooth skin. Check for errors or inconsistencies in lighting, shadows, reflections, and scale. Look for repeated pixels.

When looking at photos online, check the metadata, found in "properties". This data, stored in what are called "EXIF tags", may be able to tell you the date it was taken, the camera used, possibly the location, and more. Note: there are tools to remove this metadata.

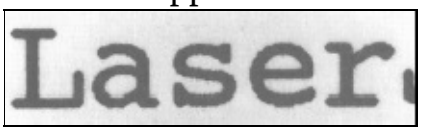
There is a website called FotoForensics.com that allows you to determine how much a photo has been edited, using what is called an Error Level Analysis.

PRINTED TEXT

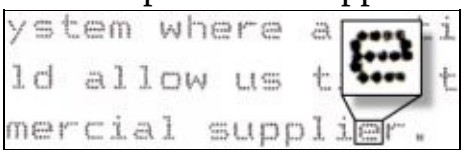
Text printed with an ink jet printer will have tiny splatters around the letters, due to the cartridge spitting out the ink quickly.



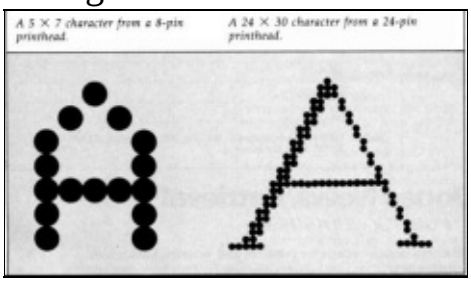
Text printed with a laser printer will appear much more smooth and crisp.



Text printed on a 9-pin dot-matrix printer will appear as a bunch of large dots.



Text printed with a 24-pin dot-matrix printer will appear more smooth than a 9-pin, with smaller dots closer together.



Photocopies are similar in appearance to laser prints, and are more difficult to distinguish.

Sometimes, photocopies may have marks, such as hair or dirt that got onto the copying screen.

HANDWRITTEN TEXT

See the “Helpful Resources” section in the back of this book for an introduction to handwriting analysis, otherwise known as graphology.

A signature that has been forged will often contain unnatural starts and stops,

inconsistencies in letters sizes, spacing, and so on. The letters may look as though they have been drawn instead of written. Any mistakes will have been carefully corrected or redrawn, and if there are multiple forged signatures, they will look nearly identical (whereas in reality a person's signature will never look identical).

Disguised handwriting will often contain inconsistencies in slant, letter size, and so on. There may be unnatural starts and stops, and excessive ornamentation. It may have been written with the opposite hand.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Many of the tips I have given you thus far are also applicable when attempting to make deductions from photographs. If it is a photograph of someone's house, the information from chapter eight (Around the House) will certainly come in handy. However, there is a distinct difference in being able to navigate through space for deductions and simply looking at a photo. For example, you may not know where the house in the photo is located. It may be of use to be aware of the signs that tell you the location of a house, or the kind of person that inhabits it. If you are looking at a photo of a person, you don't get to see as much body language or listen to them speak, but you may be able to tell some of the traits they possess, for example.

Remember that people can be clever whilst taking photographs, and intentionally leave certain things out. Objects and people can be posed for photographs. A person can take a picture of their face from above to make it look more aesthetically pleasing, and this concept applies to photos of anything. A person can rearrange things in their room before taking a picture of it, because they may be embarrassed about a certain photo on their desk, or want to impress you with cleanliness habits they don't have.

There are thirteen types of electrical outlets (types A through M) around the world. Of course, many countries use the same electrical outlets, so be sure to pair electrical outlets with other evidence. For example, there are only two

English-speaking countries that use the type A outlet: United States of America, and Canada. If I see a type A outlet in conjunction with other evidence, such as a bookshelf with books written in English of topics such as the Civil War or Barack Obama, or a product that is only sold in the US (Google may be rather helpful figuring that out), then I may be fairly certain that this photo was taken in America.

Consider what was mentioned earlier about the power of photo manipulation.

Don’t forget about reflective surfaces.

Remember that if you don’t know what something is, you should always try and research it.

IX
Helpful Resources

Photos, charts, maps, and other information that you may find relevant, including a bibliography and extensive list of recommended material for further research.

AN INTRODUCTION TO GRAPHOLOGY

Images and descriptions in this section have been quoted directly from Handwriting University International's "Handwriting Analysis Quick Reference Guide for Beginners" by Bart A. Bagget (see bibliography).

I have selected just a small handful of examples of this guide, to introduce you to the science of handwriting analysis.

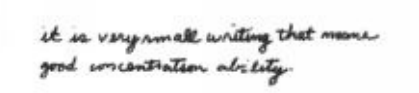
AGGRESSIVENESS

Shown by hard right upstrokes that replace a lower loop. The aggressive person pushes forward into the future asserting himself physically. Often this person needs physically aggressive outlets such as competitive sports or even violence.

ATTENTIVE TO DETAILS

Revealed by the dots on the *i* and *j* being placed close to the stem. The closer the dot is to the stem, the more attention the writer pays to details. This trait contributes to a good memory. Notices everything.

CONCENTRATION



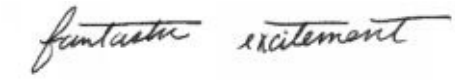
Extremely small writing. People that write tiny have the ability to shut everything out of their mind and fully concentrate on one thing at a time. Often, on a first impression, these people seem reserved.

LOC STRENGTH

EGO STRENGTH

Shown by the size of the capital letters. Capitals 4-5 times the middle zone indicate a writer with an inflated importance of himself (ego). Likewise, capitals within the middle zone indicate weak ego strength, thus affecting self-esteem.

ENTHUSIASM



An unusually long stroke that makes the cross bar of the *t*. This writer bubbles over with enthusiasm and excitement. Enthusiasm is a key ingredient to success in leadership, because it motivates others toward action.

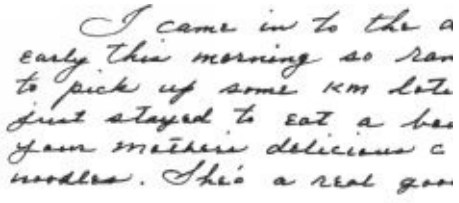
FLUIDITY OF THOUGHT

Shown in the figure eight shape anywhere in the writing. Most commonly found in the lower loop of the *g* or in the capital letters of a signature. Signifies the ability to follow and change thoughts
smoothly. Often a good conversationalist, speaker, or writer.

OPTIMISM

Revealed by a noticeable upward slant in the entire baseline and/or the cross bar on the letter t. The higher the incline, the more optimistic she is. She is sure tomorrow will be better and always looks on the bright side of life.

PERFECTIONISM



The baseline will be straight and even. This handwriting is that of a person who spends time putting everything in its place and reviews work trying to make it precise.

SELF RELIANCE & LEADERSHIP

Revealed by an underline below one’s signature. This person possesses strong leadership qualities, relies on himself, and has a great amount of inner strength.

SLANT OF HANDWRITING

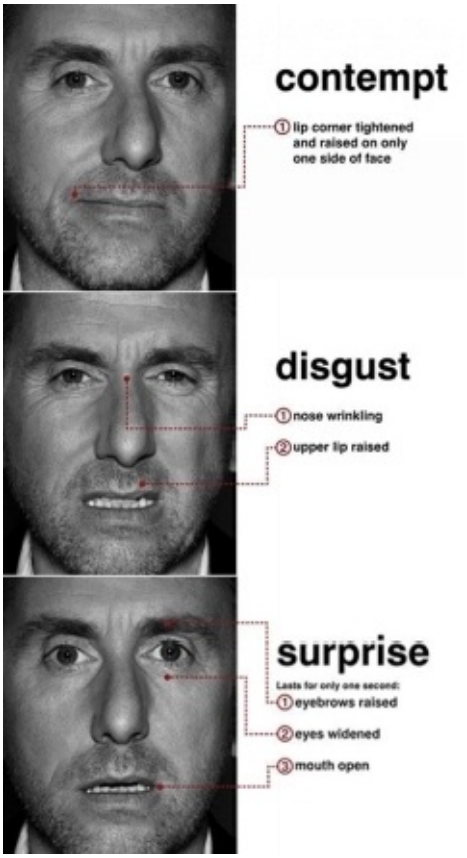
The slant of the handwriting can indicate one's emotional openness.

MICROEXPRESSIONS

A microexpression is a brief, involuntary facial expression that reflects one of seven universal emotions: happiness, sadness, anger, fear, contempt, disgust, and surprise. They can occur as quickly as 1/25th of a second, and are difficult to replicate. They often occur when a person is attempting to conceal an emotion or is in a win-or-lose situation.

Tim Roth, from the television show "Lie to Me", demonstrates the seven universal microexpressions.

happiness
A real smile always includes:
① crow's feet wrinkles
② pushed up cheeks
③ movement from muscle that orbits the eye
sadness
① drooping upper eyelids
② losing focus in eyes
③ slight pulling down of lip corners
anger
① eyebrows down and together
② eyes glare
③ narrowing of the lips
fear
① eyebrows raised and pulled together
② raised upper eyelids
③ tensed lower eyelids
④ lips slightly stretched horizontally back to ears



LEFT-SIDE TRAFFIC

Europe: Great Britain and dependencies (Channel Islands, Isle of Man), Cyprus, Ireland, Malta.

Oceania: Australia and dependencies, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Nauru, Niue, Norfolk Island, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu.

Americas: Guyana and Suriname. Off mainland America: Bermuda, Falkland Islands.

Caribbean: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, British Virgin Island, US Virgin Islands.

Asia: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, East Timor, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand.

Africa: Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Off mainland Africa: Mauritius, Saint Helena, Seychelles.

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Smith, Daniel. *How to Think Like Sherlock*. London: Michael O’Mara, 2012. Print.

Taylor, Kaden. “The Everyday Deductionist: An Experiment in Logic.” http://everydaydeductionist.tumblr.com/

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

I recommend all of the sources in my bibliography, but here are some additional sources that may assist you on your quest for insight on the art and science of deduction.

All of the Sherlock Holmes short stories and novels by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Sherlock (BBC)
Lie To Me (FOX)
Psych (USA Network)
Elementary (CBS)

Bernays, Paul, dir. *How Sherlock Changed the World*. PBS. 16 December 2013. Television documentary.

Konnikova, Maria. *Mastermind: How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes*. New York: Viking, 2013. Print.

RESOURCES FOR SPECIFIC TOPICS

"Electric Power Around The World." Global Electric and Phone Directory. **http://www.kropla.com/electric2.htm**

Ekman, Paul. "Micro Expressions." Paul Ekman Group LLC. **http://www.paulekman.com/microexpressions/**

Erard, Michael. *Um...: Slips, Stumbles, and Verbal Blunders, and What They Mean*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2007.

"Examining and Documenting Blood Stain Patterns." Crime Scene Forensics. **http://www.crimescene-forensics.com/Crime_Scene_Foren sics/Bloodstains.html**

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A Few Final Words

I hope that your journey for knowledge does not end here, and that this book has taught or reaffirmed to you the importance of being aware of your surroundings, and understanding people. Not only is deduction a great party trick (because come on, let's face it, that's one of the reasons you picked up this book), but it gives you an alternate way of thinking and perceiving life, and it can be of great benefit in the most unexpected of situations.

Erin Rideour, owner of the blog "The Brain Attic", once deduced herself out of being lost.

> *One morning a while back I was driving to a part of town I don't go to except to visit this one thrift store. Naturally I don't know the surrounding neighborhood much at all. When I came to my turn the road was blocked off for construction, so I had to take the next street and figure out how to weave my way to my destination. The roads in this area are hilly and very windy and confusing. Rather than waste gas guessing at which turnings to take, I started to follow the car in front of me based on these observations: There is a preschool on the same street as the thrift store, which has short hours. The kids will be getting picked up by their parents around this time of late morning.*
>
> *The car in front of me is an SUV with the back window plastered with rainbow flower decals. This is a poor Hispanic neighborhood, so for someone to spend the extra money on a larger vehicle with more space and poorer gas mileage, they've done it out of necessity*

rather than pleasure - thus, most likely multiple children. It is also more common in Hispanic families with children for objects to be casually decorated with stickers and the like.

Last, it's statistically more likely that, because of the construction and the hour of the day, they were trying to get to the same street as me.

Sure enough, after tailing the SUV for a minute or so I became un-lost, and the vehicle stopped in front of the preschool.

Although this book covers a great variety of topics, it was meant to be an introduction into the world of deduction, not a comprehensive guide. It is certainly not the last word in deduction, either; I have barely scratched the surface as far as what is possible. I highly recommend sifting through the bibliography and recommended material, as it is a great place to start.

I bid you good luck on your quest.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Louise Blackwood is the founder of The Deduction Guide, a blog she runs with Grant Sparks.

She is an orchestral percussionist and composer by trade. In her free time, she enjoys hiking and traveling, listening to Sergei Rachmaninoff, devil-sticking, drinking tea, and eating bagels.

thedeductionguide.tumblr.com

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[1] Cooper, Belle Beth. "What Happens to the Brain When You Meditate (And How it Benefits You)." Lifehacker.

[2] As a matter of fact, I may have contributed to this:
Qureshi, Yakub. "'Love locks' left by amorous couples cause railing collapse on Paris bridge." Mirror. http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/love-locks-left-amorous-couples-3692780